























## Planning Peer Review Action Plan – Progress on Actions as at July 2015







Key	Some progress but action not completed	
	Action not commenced/progressed yet.	
	Action completed/achieved.	








PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS		ACHIEVED
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2014		
<b>1. Set a clear political narrative for the long term future of the borough stressing the need and importance of homes, jobs, infrastructure and locally generated income/grant. Develop a 'golden thread' linking this to key corporate policy documents including the local plan.</b>		
(a)	Prepare revised Council Plan that reflects the relationship between key strategies and setting out broad strategic policy objectives.	
(b)	More active use of the Council's media and communications resources showcasing good work	Ongoing








<b>PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
Actions agreed by Cabinet 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	<b>ACHIEVED</b>
<b>2. Develop a coherent strategy for investment and growth which recognises the key role that planning performs. Examine opportunities for the release or reuse of land assets with partners to stimulate growth and economic development</b>	
(a) Strengthen the narrative and strategic context in the next Asset Management Strategy and Capital Strategy	
<b>3. Develop an interim planning policy statement (IPPS) as part of local plan preparation process</b>	
(a) Bring forward a report to Cabinet on this recommendation identifying the potential benefits and costs of such a proposal, including implications for the existing Local Plan timetable and the weight that such a statement could have in development management decisions	
(b) If proposal is agreed by Cabinet, report back (to next Cabinet) with a timetable for the preparation of such a Statement, identifying required consultation and resource implications	
(c) Implement the decision of Cabinet	
<b>4. Re-examine resource allocations, especially in planning policy and enforcement to ensure that these match priorities and needs. Switch or increase resources to match priorities including pump priming, partnering and planning performance agreements (PPAs).</b>	
(a) Consider whether within Planning Policy a fixed 4 year term Senior Planning Officer post should be created and recruited to rather than the agreed but currently unfilled Planning Policy Officer post (bringing Planning Policy team up to 4 – Business Manager, 2 Seniors and 1 Non-Senior Officer)	







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(b) Review whether to either create a temporary post dedicated planning enforcement support officer or create, by other means additional capacity for planning officers to progress their enforcement workload	
(c) Explore idea of creating a premium or fast track service for development management – report to Cabinet	
(d) Engage with Staffordshire One Place initiative (inter authority trading of services)	<b>Ongoing</b>
(e) Explore whether any scope to utilise SOTCC's planning enforcement services on a temporary basis	
(f) Consider whether to make an application for Neighbourhood Planning Grant, to provide additional resources to support potential Neighbourhood Development plans	<b>Ongoing</b>
(g) Review of pre-application charges as part of fees and charges review	
(h) Process review to identify tasks that should no longer be undertaken	
(i) Reassess current targets in the 2014 Service Plan, seeking member views	

<b>PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
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(j) Consider potential use again of consultants to address short term DM staffing issues, requiring report to EMT	
(k) Resolve issue of authority to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and explore, in appropriate cases, whether use of PPA could bring in additional income	
<b>5. Develop systematic links between financial planning and local plan development / monitoring to help focus on costs and income in relation to non-national domestic rate, council tax and new homes bonus</b>	
(a) Review of information flow arrangements between Planning and Finance on projected completions, housing development trajectories	
(b) Include within review of decision reports structure, specific section on finance considerations and weight to be given to them	
(c) Training for Planning Committee and officers on local finance considerations as a material consideration in the determination of applications	
(d) Publication of guidance on status and weight to be accorded to local finance considerations in planning decisions	
(e) Council as a landowner engages fully in the Local Plan preparation process including the Call for Sites	








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<b>6. Establish an informal pre planning briefing for members of the planning committee including a review of strategic planning group.</b>	
(a) Review remit, membership (widened to include all members of the Planning Committee) and business of Strategic Planning Consultative Group, involving the Group and bring report to Cabinet for decision	
(b) Introduce Proactive presentation of items by officers at Planning Committee when appropriate	
(c) Change frequency of planned Planning Committee from every 3 weeks to every 4 weeks, holding separate meetings where possible and required to deal with planning policy items	
(d) Decide whether to reschedule at same time, onto a four weekly cycle CAWP, SPCG, & Development Team meetings	
<b>7. Set up effective mandatory councillor training programme that is bespoke to meeting local needs. Develop wider training programme for councillors and officers to be delivered jointly where ever possible focusing on improving understanding of respective roles and the need for effective engagement</b>	
(a) Maintaining current provision of induction training to any member of the Planning Committee prior to their first meeting, with attendance not permissible unless received	
(b) Continue to bring subject specific reports to the Planning committee – e.g. on the 5 year housing land supply issue, and on the results of evidence base gathering for the Joint Local Plan, but to a Committee meeting with no development content wherever possible, even if an additional meeting is required	







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(c) Continue with feedback reports including on appeal and costs decisions and annual appeal performance reports to Planning Committee	
(d) Set up and deliver 6 training programme in 2014/15 involving delivery of two off the peg training sessions delivered by TRA or similar (to both Planning Committee and Non-Planning Committee members) and 4 bespoke sessions for Planning Committee members only delivered probably externally rather than in house	
(e) Arrange above out of hours training sessions, at a time when officers can also attend (early evening) with time off in lieu recompense, in order to provide local examples to add to external training input	
(f) Encourage members even more than is already done to take up conference, training and similar opportunities	
(g) Chair and Vice Chair to be sent on courses specific to that role	
(h) Remind members of Planning Committees' agreed policy that failure to attend 2/3 <sup>rd</sup> of training sessions means that they cannot then take part in decisions at Planning Committee	
(i) Putting on wider training sessions for non- planning committee members on probity, member officer relations, etc	
<b>8. Review the guidance and protocols in relation to section 106(s) to seek to frontload the system and reach decisions more quickly on major applications</b>	








<b>PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
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<i>Reviewing Section 106 procedures</i>	
(a) Review local validation requirements to consider whether more applications should require to be accompanied by 'Heads of terms', or whether draft agreements should be required	
(b) Ensure that the validation requirements of submission of Heads of terms (of any likely Section 106 agreement) are applied in a consistent, but also not disproportionate manner	
(c) Renewed focus on clarity of instructions to Legal and completion of all sections of 'instructions to legal' memo	
(d) Confirmation of receipt of instructions to legal to be sent in all cases to Planning (client care memo)	
(e) Informing SCC where party to the agreement of the terms of the resolution of the Planning Committee immediately post Committee	
(f) Introduce officer check in Planning that prior instructions to Legal Services has been undertaken in all possible cases	
(g) Legal to Introduce early check procedure of instructions received	






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(h) Introduce Service Level agreement between Legal and Planning setting standards for response times to instructions/ requests for clarification	
(i) Planning Service to provide instructions and comments on drafts to legal, including where other departments involved	
(j) Resume monthly S106 meetings	
(k) Consideration to be given to use of external solicitors where Legal services do not have capacity to act upon instructions	
<i>Reaching decisions more quickly on Major applications</i>	
(l) Support officers in DM to stop doing validation on Major applications (because of the degree of judgement required)	
(m) DM Team leader and SPOs to start doing validation of Majors	



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(n) Invite Education Authority to become part of the Council's Development Team	
(o) Inviting other key consultees to enter into a Service Level Agreement, as already in place between the BC and the Highway Authority	
(p) Project Management approach to Major developments	
(q) Draft conditions to be prepared within 2 weeks of Committee in all cases and to be subject to consultation with developer	
<b>9. Re-examine the scheme of delegation to allow the Planning Committee to focus on major applications</b>	
(a) Review Scheme of delegation with particular reference to telecom apparatus, consultations by other authorities, historic building grant applications	
(b) Review of public speaking arrangements, guillotine on late representations, site visit protocol and withdrawal of call in procedures	
(c) Review of Planning Committee Members Protocol, seeking approval of the Planning Committee	

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<b>10. Review the decision to suspend work on community infrastructure levy</b>	
(a) Seek external legal advice on the issue of pooling post April 2015 and revisit advice given to December 13 Cabinet that adoption of CIL charging Schedule could not proceed in light of decision to abandon Site Allocations & Policies Local Plan and proceed with new Local Plan	
(b) Bring report to Cabinet at earliest opportunity	
<b>11. Undertake systematic review of the effectiveness of the service's methods of communication and access focussing on councillors, parish councils and service users</b>	
(a) Review decision to remove direct dial facility for DM staff (introduced as part of move towards support based triage system)	
(b) Depending on above reintroduce Direct Dial perhaps with number available only to members (and agents?)	
(c) Ensure all staff working @home have access to phone	
(d) Review current appointment based system and consider alternatives	

<b>PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
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(e) Review use of Customer Service agents as front end of the planning service	
(f) Customer Service training for all planning staff	
(g) Review Delegated and Committee reports, particularly for effectiveness and use of Plain English – remembering who reports are for	
(h) Include officer details on adverts/weekly lists/consultation letters/emails	
(i) Statement of Community Involvement, review	
(j) Continue support for Parish council training/ attendance at parish/town council forum as recently undertaken	
(k) Programme of annual visits by Head of Planning, Development Management Manager and Planning Policy Manager to Parish and Town Councils	
(l) Offer to established clerks opportunity to visit Planning service (as already done for new parish clerks)	<b>Ongoing</b>

<b>PLANNING REVIEW TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
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(m) Improve DM office layout and make it clearer who is who for visitors	
(n) Encouraging members to meet officers in reception in more suitable setting	
(o) Renewed focus on labelling of documents on website	
(p) Publication of guide to Planning website and in particular Public Access aspect	
(q) 6 month central monitoring of correspondence from Parish Councils	
(r) Review approach to customer satisfaction surveys	